

REMARKS

The present amendment and remarks are in response to the Final Office Action mailed on December 24, 2002. Claims 1-3 are pending in the application. The Office Action rejects claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and rejects claims 1-3 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claim 1 has been amended. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned “Versions with Markings to Show Changes Made.” Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections have been overcome or are improper in view of the amendments and for the reasons set forth below.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,812,857 to Nelson et al. (“*Nelson*”). Applicants respectfully submit that *Nelson* does not disclose a number of the elements of the present claims and, therefore, does not anticipate the present invention. For example, *Nelson* does not disclose a method for operating a first computer connected to a computer network including the step of automatically reconfiguring the physical hardware structure of the first computer corresponding to configuration data such that the first computer exhibits a hardware structure adjusted to the first task as featured in the present claims.

Of the pending claims, claim 1 is the only independent claim. Independent claim 1, as amended, relates to a method for operating a network computer. More specifically, the method relates to operating a first computer that is connected to a network, such as an intranet or the Internet. The method includes the steps of loading first configuration data for a first task, allocated to the first computer, into the first computer via the network wherein the loading is initiated either independently or in response to a specific request, automatically reconfiguring the physical hardware structure of the first computer corresponding to the first configuration data so

that the first computer exhibits a hardware structure adjusted to the first task, and processing the first task with the first computer configured with the first configuration data.

As discussed in the specification, it is the state of the art to use network computers having fixed hardware that can load required program parts from a central computer so as to configure the software of the network computer corresponding to a specific application which is to run on the network computer. In contrast, to obtain a more effective configuration of a network computer, the present invention automatically reconfigures the physical hardware structure based on configuration data for a specific task such that the computer exhibits a hardware structure suited for the specific task. In this manner, for example, the specification discloses configurable hardware structures such as FPGAs (i.e., Field-Programmable Gate Arrays) whereby these hardware structures are physically reconfigured automatically based on the configuration data.

In contrast, *Nelson* discloses an apparatus and a method for downloading software upgrades to a computer system over a computer network. The Office Action points to element 41 of Figure 4 in *Nelson* when discussing the reconfigurable hardware feature of the present claims. However, element 41 is a download code set which is merely a computer file or code (i.e., software) that is downloaded and replaces a previous feature code. *See, Nelson*, Col. 5, Lines 1-18.

In addition, the Office Action points to Col. 4, Lines 23-26 of *Nelson* where the download select means is discussed. The download select means is a switch either in software or hardware that enables the device of *Nelson* to function in either a normal or a download mode. *See, Nelson*, Col. 5, Lines 1-18. In this manner, engaging the download select means initiates the downloading of the download code set. *See, Nelson*, Col. 5, Lines 19-20. Thus, *Nelson* discloses

a device having a software or hardware switch that, when engaged, causes a new code set to be downloaded to replace a previous code set.

However, nowhere does *Nelson* disclose automatically reconfiguring the physical hardware structure of the device based on configuration data for a specific task such that the device exhibits a hardware structure suited for the specific task as featured in claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that *Nelson* does not anticipate the claim 1 and request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,012,088 to Li et al. ("*Li*") in view of United States Patent No. 6,298,370 to Tang et al. ("*Tang*"). Applicants respectfully submit that *Li* even if combined with *Tang* fails to teach or suggest a number of features of the claimed invention. For example, *Li* and *Tang*, like *Nelson*, do not disclose a method for operating a first computer connected to a computer network including the step of automatically reconfiguring the physical hardware structure of the first computer corresponding to configuration data such that the first computer exhibits a hardware structure adjusted to the first task as featured in the present claims.

Li relates to an internet access device which uses an automatic configuration process to handle the task of configuring the internet access device at a customer site for communication with the Internet. The customer enters a registration identification number and a telephone number onto the internet access device and the internet access device then connects to the Internet, downloads configuration data from a configuration server containing customer site-specific configuration data, and configures itself for communication with the Internet. *See, Li*, Abstract; Col. 3, Lines 23-61; Col. 9, Lines 11-63; and Col. 12, Lines 38-48.

In configuring itself for communication with the Internet, the device in *Li* consults the configuration record, which contains a number of settings including the customer domain name, the customer LAN network IP address, the Internet access device IP address, PPP account login, password information, and secondary DNS server information. *See, Li*, Col. 14, Lines 50-65. Knowing these settings enables the existing hardware of internet access device in its present structure to access the Internet and perform other functions such as retrieving electronic mail. However, nowhere does *Li* teach or suggest that the configuration record is used to automatically reconfigure the actual physical hardware structure of the device as featured in the present claims.

Tang is cited merely for teaching features relevant to dependent claims 2 and 3. In this regard *Tang* also does not teach or suggest a computer network which receives configuration data and, in response thereto, automatically reconfigures the physical hardware structure of the network computer so as to obtain a hardware structure which is adjusted to a respective task as featured in the present claims. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that *Li* and *Tang* do not render obvious the features of the present claims and request the rejection of claims 1-3 be withdrawn.

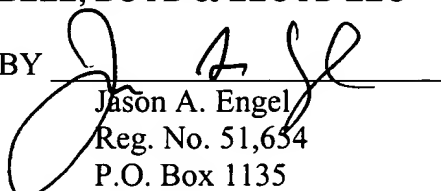
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application and earnestly solicit an early allowance of the same.

It is further noted that no fees are due in connection with this application at this time. However, if any fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the office is authorized to deduct said fees from Deposit Account No. 02-1818. If such a withdrawal is made, please indicate the Attorney Docket No. (114543-002) on the Account Statement.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY


Jason A. Engel

Reg. No. 51,654

P.O. Box 1135

Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135

Phone: (312) 807-4236

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A method for operating a first computer that is connected to a network, the method comprising the steps of:

loading first configuration data for a first task, allocated to the first computer, into the first computer via the network wherein the loading is initiated either independently or in response to a specific request;

automatically reconfiguring the physical hardware structure of the first computer corresponding to the first configuration data so that the first computer exhibits a hardware structure adjusted to the first task; and

processing the first task with the first computer configured with the first configuration data.